

Austin Update

TWIA Board Will Consider Rate Increases, Discount Credits at August 3rd Meeting

Attached is the letter submitted by the City of Galveston opposing the 5 percent premium rate increase recommended by the Texas Windstorm Insurance Association (TWIA) Actuarial & Underwriting Committee. As a reminder, the TWIA Board is scheduled to meet and vote on the Committee's recommendation to increase rates by 5 percent for residential and commercial policies on **Tuesday, August 3 at 9:00 am**. The Board will meet [via Zoom](#) to consider the Association's annual rate filing in addition to other items. Unfortunately, legislation passed by the 87th Texas Legislature requiring a two-thirds vote of the Board to increase rates does not become effective until September 1st.

TWIA is offering the following public comment options for this meeting, which are outlined below:

1. TWIA is accepting written public comments that will be provided to the Board members at PublicComment@TWIA.org.
2. Members of the public can also register to provide public comment to the Board members [via Zoom](#) during the designated portion of the meeting.
3. Finally, TWIA is facilitating public comment at [The Tremont House Hotel – Davidson Building](#) in Galveston. *The TWIA Board members will not be present at this location*, but TWIA will be broadcasting the entire meeting from this location and providing an on camera public comment option using Zoom for interested members of the public.

I am registered to provide public comment opposing the premium rate increase. Please let me know if you plan to make public comment during the meeting.

2021 Legislative Session – What's Next?

July 8 – 1st called Special Session Begins (30 days)

August 6 – Last Day of the 1st Special Session

Over 50 Democrats of the Texas House remain in Washington D.C. to block passage of a SB 1, an election reform bill that passed the Texas Senate. With the House failing to reach a quorum with the absent legislators, the Texas House is unable to take action (even hold committee hearings) leaving the 1st Special Session of the 87th Legislature at a standstill. The Texas House Democrats are committed to staying in DC until the 1st Special Session ends on August 6th. Meanwhile, three (3) Texas House Democrats (State Rep. Nicole Collier, Rep. Senfronia Thompson, and Rep. Diego Bernal) testified before the US House Subcommittee on Civil Rights and Civil Liberties expressing their concerns about Texas election reform legislation. State Rep. Travis Clardy, a Nacogdoches Republican, also testified in support of the Texas election reform legislation (HB 3 and SB 2). Governor Abbott has yet to make any announcement regarding a subsequent special session to address the current agenda items including budget funding for the Legislature that was line-item vetoed.

Governor's Order GA-38 Related to Mask Mandates and Vaccine Passports

On July 29, the governor issued [Executive Order GA-38](#), which basically restates previously[1]ordered limitations on local governments' and certain business owners' ability to require proof of COVID-19 vaccines, as well as restating previous limitations on local governments' ability to require face-coverings. The portions of this Order related to vaccines and

“vaccine passports” mirror Executive Order GA-35 from April, and the portions of this Order related to face coverings mirror Executive Order GA-36 issued in May. Details are below:

- o Mask Mandates: Under this order, no governmental entity or governmental official may require any person to wear a face covering. No local governmental entity or official may limit business activities, or legal proceedings for COVID-19-related reasons. Any limitations imposed by a local government or official could be subject to a fine up to \$1,000. Exempt from this portion of the order are state-supported living centers, government-owned or operated hospitals, Texas Department of Criminal Justice facilities, Texas Juvenile Justice Department facilities, and county and municipal jails.
- o COVID-19 Vaccines: No governmental entity can compel any individual to receive a COVID-19 vaccine, and no political subdivision shall adopt any order, ordinance, policy, regulation, rule or similar measure that requires an individual to provide documentation regarding that individual’s COVID-19 vaccination status as a condition to receiving any service or entering any place. Any public or private entity that is receiving or will receive public funds through any means, shall not require a consumer to provide documentation regarding their COVID-19 vaccination status as a condition of receiving any service or entering any place. Exempt from this portion of the order are nursing homes, state supported living centers, assisted living facilities, and long-term care facilities. Additionally, this Order contains requirements for any entity conducting COVID-19 tests to report results to the Department of State Health Services and for all hospitals to report their available bed capacity to DSHS as well.

Open Meetings Act Reminder

In March 2020, Governor Abbott’s office granted the attorney general’s request to suspend certain open-meeting statutes. The temporary suspension allows, among other things, for telephonic or videoconference meetings of governmental bodies that are accessible to the public in an effort to reduce in-person meetings that assemble large groups of people. On June 30, 2021, the governor’s office approved a request by the attorney general to lift those suspensions. Consequently, as of 12:01 a.m. on September 1, 2021, all Texas governmental bodies subject to the Open Meetings Act must conduct their meetings in full compliance with the Open Meetings Act as written in state law.

Washington Update

US Senate Begins Consideration of Bipartisan Infrastructure Legislation

Likely to continue work through the weekend, the US Senate begins consideration of the \$1.2 trillion bipartisan infrastructure legislation negotiated between a group of 21 senators (10 Republicans and 11 Democrats) and the Biden Administration. Senator Cornyn is expected to offer an amendment to the legislation that will add language from a bill he filed with Senator Tim Kaine (D-VA) and Senator Mark Warner (D-VA), Giving Relief to American Communities in Emergencies (GRACE) Act (S. 1223 attached), to protect small urbanized areas experiencing population changes due to major disaster. Specifically, the Cornyn amendment will address a unique transit federal fiscal year 2022 funding gap for Galveston and allow the Secretary of the Department of Transportation, in response to a request from the Governor, to continue recognizing a community as a small urbanized area until the next Decennial Census when the loss of population is due to the impacts of a natural disaster.

Resources Available to Prepare for the 2020 Census Redistricting Data Release

The US Census Bureau will release the 2020 Census redistricting data twice in two formats at different times to make sure states get the data as quickly as possible. The first data release will occur August 16th, followed by a second data release by September 30th. Acting Director Dr. Ron Jarmin explained these two releases in his blog, [Redistricting Data: What to Expect and When](#). You can read more information about the formats and support materials available [here](#).

FEMA Releases Guide on Building Private-Public Partnerships

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) released a [guide](#) entitled *Building Private-Public Partnerships*. The guide provides recommendations, best practices and resources for a jurisdiction to establish and maintain a private-public partnership (P3) to help coordinate mitigation, response and recovery planning and preparedness. FEMA is also hosting a series of 60-minute [webinars](#) to discuss the guide and answer stakeholders' questions.

Reports of Interest

The Party Police: How Platforms and Cities Can Partner on “Party Houses” – Webinar on 8/4

While most short-term rental hosts share their homes responsibly, some cause disruption. Join Airbnb trust and safety leadership and LAPD Commanding Officer Steven Lurieto to discuss collaborative solutions to a challenge that can impact cities of all sizes.

[Learn More >](#)